

# **INTRODUCTION**

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### Background and Perspective

The Inspections and Evaluations (I&E) Division of the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) began an inspection of the District of Columbia (District) Department of Human Services (DHS), Youth Services Administration (YSA) in April 2003. YSA, the District's primary juvenile justice agency, is a large organization and is responsible for a diverse portfolio of service providers and facilities.

YSA has approximately 480 full-time employees, and its fiscal year (FY) 2003 operating budget was approximately \$53 million. The budget consisted of \$39 million in appropriated funds, and \$14 million in federal grants, intra-District funding, and social services block grants.

According to its 2001 annual report,<sup>4</sup> each year, YSA provides daily pre-trial and pre-dispositional secure and non-secure detention services to approximately 250 youths charged with delinquency. In addition, it provides secure confinement, residential placements, and aftercare supervision and services for approximately 600 youths. YSA's stated mission is to empower youths entrusted to its care to become lawful, competent, and productive citizens. It performs this mission by:

- providing an integrated system of care, custody, and services involving youth, families and community;
- holding youths accountable in the least restrictive environment;
- establishing and implementing an individual service plan for each youth which assists in competency development, rehabilitation, and reintegration; and
- promoting public peace and community safety.

The inspection of YSA was conducted in two parts. Part One focused on all operations at the Oak Hill Youth Center (OHYC) in Laurel, Maryland, as well as YSA management and administrative services. A Final Report of Inspection was issued for Part One in March 2004.

This report documents Part Two of the inspection, which evaluated the Division of Court and Community Programs (DCCP), formerly known as the Bureau of Court and Community Services (BCCS). DCCP has approximately 82 full-time employees, and uses private contractors to provide services such as comprehensive substance abuse treatment, residential programs, tutoring and skills enrichment, home-based counseling and support, and intensive supervision.<sup>5</sup>

***The inspection team (team) found many DCCP employees who were highly motivated and dedicated to carrying out YSA's mission. Unfortunately, however, the team also found deficient management oversight, a lack of written policies and procedures in key areas, and a lack of accountability for the use of some DCCP and District resources.***

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<sup>4</sup> No annual report was issued in 2002 or 2003.

<sup>5</sup> This includes daily curfew monitoring, school checks, and intensive community monitoring.

### Scope and Methodology

OIG inspections comply with standards established by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and pay particular attention to the quality of internal control.<sup>6</sup>

The inspection focused on the management and operations of key areas, including compliance with District of Columbia Superior Court mandates, intake and court liaison services, alternative detention services, group and shelter home operations, aftercare and case management services, special residential placement, and community services. The team reviewed best practices recommended by the American Correctional Association (ACA)<sup>7</sup> and Chapter 62 of Title 29 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR), entitled "Licensing of Youth Shelters, Runaway Shelters, Emergency Care Facilities, and Youth Group Homes."<sup>8</sup> The team also reviewed applicable best practices in other jurisdictions, conducted 39 interviews, and observed major work areas and key work processes. This report contains 19 findings and 41 recommendations.

Although most DCCP employees were cooperative and responsive, the team found some managers less than helpful in providing requested information in a complete and timely manner, and in explaining or clarifying DCCP operations.

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<sup>6</sup> "Internal control" is synonymous with "management control" and is defined by the Government Accountability Office as comprising "the plans, methods, and procedures used to meet missions, goals, and objectives and, in doing so, supports performance-based management. Internal control also serves as the first line of defense in safeguarding assets and preventing and detecting errors and fraud." STANDARDS FOR INTERNAL CONTROL IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, Introduction at 4 (Nov. 1999).

<sup>7</sup> The team consulted "Standards for Juvenile Probation and Aftercare Services", "Standards for Juvenile Community Residential Facilities", and "Standards for Juvenile Detention Facilities," which were published in 1983, 1994, and 1991 respectively by ACA in cooperation with the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections (CAC). ACA and CAC are private, nonprofit organizations that administer the only national accreditation program for all components of adult and juvenile corrections. Their purpose is to promote improvement in the management of correctional agencies through the administration of a voluntary accreditation program and the ongoing development and revision of relevant, useful standards. Founded in 1870, the ACA is the oldest and largest international correctional association in the world. The standards set forth by the ACA can assist administrators of juvenile facilities in developing plans for upgrading facilities and procedures in accordance with nationally recognized and respected benchmarks. In addition, they help administrators work effectively with courts, legislatures, and the public.

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 62 of Title 29 DCMR was finalized by the Director of the Child and Family Services Agency, the Director of the Department of Human Services, and the Administrator of the Youth Services Administration on September 21, 2001. The purpose of the chapter is to provide guidelines for the health, safety, and welfare of children who are receiving care in youth shelter, runaway shelter, emergency care facility, or youth group homes through the formulation, application, and enforcement of minimum standards and requirements for the licensing and operation of facilities serving children.

### **Compliance and Follow-Up**

The OIG inspection process includes follow-up with inspected agencies on findings and recommendations. Compliance forms with findings and recommendations will be sent to YSA along with this report of inspection. The OIG/I&E Division will coordinate with YSA on verifying compliance with recommendations in this report over an established time period. In some instances, follow-up inspection activities and additional reports may be required.